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HARDING
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY®

The Bridge

The Bridge is published quarterly by Harding School of Theology for alumni, students, prospective students, contributors, and friends.

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Dr. Evertt W. Huffard
(photo credit: Jeff Montgomery)

Photo Credit: Jeff Montgomery



Greg Muse

Double Your Gift

By Greg Muse, HST Advancement Director

Would you like to double your money overnight? Well, of course you would. Harding School of Theology knows a way to do it — no Ponzi scheme required.

This column frequently encourages new endowment giving for scholarships. With a minimum of \$25,000, donors are eligible to establish scholarships to honor loved ones or to encourage theological study in a particular discipline. HST students were blessed with two new endowed scholarships in 2019. One encourages the study of biblical languages. The other encourages pulpit ministry. Both give preference to financial need.

In addition to scholarships, our students rely on infrastructure. Distance-learning electronics, utilities, campus housing, and classroom space are all vital to our students' education. Advancement's primary mission is to produce continuous cash flow to absorb the cost of education. Toward that end, our school established the HST Foundation Fund, an endowment

that generates annual revenue to defray overhead costs.

Here's the good news for HST donors! Matching funds are available through Harding University to amplify the power of your endowment giving. While funds last, new endowment gifts will be matched dollar-for-dollar. This means that your new endowment, or your gift to an existing endowment, will double in value on the day it is accepted.

Please contact me to discuss this rare opportunity. Share your vision for a lasting legacy to graduate education. A gift to a scholarship or the HST Foundation Fund blesses our students and the churches they will eventually serve.

Reflections FROM THE VP



Photo Credit: Jeff Montgomery

*An Interview with Dr. Evertt W. Huffard
By Dr. Jim Martin*

For 32 years, Dr. Evertt W. Huffard served as professor, dean, and vice president of Harding School of Theology. He is widely known in Churches of Christ throughout the world, serving congregations and church leaders in a variety of ways. The following brief interview with Dr. Huffard will give friends and alumni an update on this new chapter of his life and ministry.

You ‘retired’ from Harding School of Theology in December 2019. What are you doing in this next chapter of your life?

After resigning from administration in 2016, I taught half time for three years. That first semester, Ileen and I taught and led Harding students in Zambia. Since then, I have worked part time with Mission Resource Network, preached in Millington monthly, and consulted for church leaders in 15 states and in 19 nations. I have enjoyed speaking in Bible camps, excavating in Israel, hosting two Bible land tours a year, and attending conferences. Retirement releases us to do even more — we have plans to be in nine nations this year.

You work as a consultant with a number of congregations across the U.S. and other places in the world. Are there some common problems or difficulties that you are seeing in American churches? What might the top three typical problems be?

A common challenge is that church leaders do not see themselves as “typical,” when, in fact, they have a lot in common with most other churches their size. They need more networking to encourage one another and learn from each other. The lack of a clear unifying mission would be another problem. Without a mission, churches turn inward and become satisfied with maintenance and survival, when they don’t have to. God has them in their neighborhood to be a blessing — lived out in their mission.

The third problem I observe nationally and globally can be the degree to which every culture manages to corrupt — or at least distort — what it means to follow and lead in the kingdom of God. For example, suburban Anglos in the U.S. struggle to understand what kind of followers God expects of disciples of Christ. Individualists and consumers don’t make good followers. The reverse can be observed in the majority world where people are better followers, but leaders either over-function or fail to lead for fear of conflicts or failure.

What challenges do you sometimes see in churches of other nations that American Churches of Christ are often not aware of?

The mobility of the American society has given churches enough transfer growth that they depend on an attractional model with programs and ministries to drive growth. Not so in the rest of the world, where growth comes through intentional disciple making and the development of leaders, which can take years, even decades. Another challenge is the lack of resources or a culture of giving that we have been blessed with in the U.S. Our “collection plate” economy is uncommon in the rest of the world. The downside of this

blessing can be the dependency we create in much of the world through our generosity.

If Churches of Christ are going to thrive in the 21st century, what needs to have our attention?

I believe churches will thrive when their leaders interpret what God is doing and tell their story of how God led them to become disciples of Christ.



Dr. Evertt W. Huffard speaking at 2015 Convocation.



ADDING TO YOUR *Teaching Toolbox* By Jason Knight

It is tempting to approach an adult Bible class like you are unloading carefully researched facts from a dump truck onto an unsuspecting class of busy and distracted members (thanks to Jim Martin for the illustration). The “info-dump” is an efficient model, but it might not be the most effective.

Jesus was the master teacher with all knowledge, yet he said the task of teaching was foremost about formation: “The student who is fully trained will become like the teacher” (Luke 6:40). Education is about becoming someone, not knowing something. Knowing is usually how becoming starts, but it is only the first step. We know in order to do in order to become. This exciting process is key to good, life-shaping education, the kind we hope is happening in the adult Bible classes of our churches.

Here are four suggestions for moving past knowing and on to doing and becoming in an adult Bible class:

Switch the energy or activity every 7 to 15 minutes, as happens on television. Mix personal stories into the exegesis of a passage. Sprinkle questions throughout, not just at the beginning or end. Do an activity that illustrates or applies a point. Present a series of facts in a trivia game. No matter how interesting the information, too much sustained lecture turns off the mind.

Get active — mentally or even physically. Have your class answer questions, wrestle with dilemmas, defend positions, move through the room looking at ideas, write short responses, break out into small discussion groups, play a game, or create something. Look at those verbs! If the verb sounds engaging,

the activity probably will be, too. Think about the best workshops you’ve been to: You probably did something, not just listened to someone.

Use fast, mass responses. Have members write a few words on a stickie and place it somewhere. Invest in piles of index cards and use them. Have the class write their impressions like a newspaper headline on a slip of paper. Turn to neighbors and share an idea. Have groups come up with one idea and write it on the board. Have the class find illustrative images on their phones and share with others. Then always look for ways to connect the ideas together.

“Jesus was the
master teacher
with all knowledge”

Don’t do all the thinking. Something is wrong if the teacher is doing all the work in a class. Use questions to bridge the ancient text to our modern experiences. Ask for the application instead of giving it yourself. Instead of correcting an off-the-wall answer, ask the class what they think. Thinking minds are engaged minds. Given the

opportunity, people will usually say what you would say, and so much more!

What is the most-used tool in your toolbox? Screwdriver? Hammer? Socket wrench? Tape measure? Probably so. Yet nothing beats that little L-shaped screwdriver in a tight spot or a set of Allen keys when you really need them. Lecture might be our go-to tool, and there may not be anything wrong with that. But is it time to add a few more tools as well? It takes a bit of investment, but we might like what we build even more.



Global Ministry Training

By Harold Shank

Global Christian Studies is a newly created ministry that provides a pathway for leaders in Churches of Christ outside the U.S. to obtain an advanced biblical studies degree from an accredited educational institution affiliated with Churches of Christ in the United States.

GCS takes advantage of HST LIVE. Students from around the world do not have to come to the U.S. to receive an advanced degree. They stay at home, keep their jobs, and continue their ministry with local congregations while getting their training.

GCS is not a school. It has no faculty and offers no degrees. Rather, GCS provides a pathway for leaders in Churches of Christ to earn an accredited degree in Bible, theology, or ministry from a partner school associated with our fellowship.

While two-thirds of the members of Churches of Christ live outside the U.S., the overwhelming majority of theologically trained members live within the U.S. Churches outside the U.S. are often led by foreign missionaries or missionary-trained local leaders. God has used them to further his kingdom in great ways.

While the U.S. has thousands of Christian leaders with credentialed degrees, such is not the case in many nations outside the U.S. Additionally, as those outside the U.S. with credentialed degrees age, it is widely recognized that in many places their level of preparation is not being duplicated in any appreciable way. The depth of training offered to a person by an accredited degree-granting program allows those graduates to grasp a wide range of issues that continually confront the

churches and provide reasonable resources and responses to those matters.

GCS has partnered with HST since 2018. Currently, GCS sponsors four students at HST. Two of those students are from Australia, and two are from Nigeria. The ministry seeks to grow slowly by attracting students from around the world who can complete a degree online.

All GCS students must have a written recommendation from their congregation's leadership and be capable of admission to HST. Graduates are better equipped as teachers, church leaders, developers of Bible-centered curriculum, and writers on biblical topics, and may be able to teach in training institutions.

GCS expects a student to contribute about U.S. \$2,600 to the cost of the degree. This is over a period likely to be between 5 and 8 years. The remaining costs will be covered by donors and HST-provided scholarships.

GCS is under the oversight of the elders at the Belmore Road Church of Christ in Melbourne, Australia, and the Eastside Church of Christ in Midwest City, Oklahoma.

The director of GCS is Dr. Harold Shank, a long-time preacher among Churches of Christ in the U.S. and a graduate and former adjunct professor at Harding School of Theology and professor at Oklahoma Christian University. The assistant to the director is John Coffey, a recent graduate of Harding School of Theology who now ministers in Connecticut. See gcspathway.org for more information.

“God has used them to further his kingdom in great ways.”

Wuhan

By Hunter Deng

Note: Hunter graduated from HST in 2018 and then moved to Wuhan, China with his wife, Ruby, and their son, Josiah. This article was penned in February, when the world and the status of the pandemic were very different than at publishing time in April. This story gives a perspective on where the impact began and both the familiar and different concerns of the people and places affected.

Wuhan has become quite famous recently. When speaking of China, most people could name cities like Beijing, Shanghai, or Hong Kong. Many also know about Wuhan now.

Wuhan is the capital of Hubei Province, geographically located in the center of China's people. China's bullet trains connect Wuhan with almost all the major cities in the mainland; one can travel from Wuhan to most of the first-tier cities (such as Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Xian) within five hours by bullet train. Locally, Wuhan has a population of 11 million. Four loops surround the city (like the I-240 loop around Memphis), and about 1 million people rode the nine subway lines daily before the outbreak. The subway stations and bus stations are now closed.

I believe there are two significant causes of the spread of the coronavirus. The first and foremost is the bureaucracy. "I have



The Deng family celebrates Hunter's graduation. (May 2018)

reported the information, but I am not authorized to release it to the public," Mayor Zhou stated in a conference. However, to whom Zhou reported this information and the party responsible for keeping the public under a cloud remain mysteries.

Second, since Wuhan is the center of the Fast Train System, everyone who goes out and travels through Wuhan could potentially become a virus carrier.

On Feb. 16, Wuhan escalated the lockdown; only authorized persons can enter or leave the area. Those who are familiar with online shopping and live in a newer community can order groceries online and the supermarkets deliver items to their houses. However, some in the older communities who have never shopped online struggle daily to get their food. Anyone who disobeys the lockdown is arrested and quarantined for thirty days.

Brothers and sisters from the church who serve as doctors and nurses have been working tirelessly on the front lines. Some average only four hours of sleep each day. Nurses Jaki and Sunny wear hot and heavy protective clothing and work on the front lines. Sister Ge, one of the best OBGYN doctors in town, is now quarantined.

Because the local Red Cross is not well regarded locally, several brothers and sisters created a Help Group that collects and delivers protective gear to the hospitals directly.

Churches have stopped regular meetings for over a month. Some believers meet via the internet, but some don't believe internet worship would please God. Several churches are facing both the coronavirus threat and internal conflicts at this time. I can't imagine the challenges churches will face if they stop meeting for two months or more.

*“I invite you to pray for
China and Christians in
China daily.”*

Can you imagine living in a city in which all the shops, restaurants, and factories are closed? There are no cars, buses, or taxis on the streets. People who work in those industries may not have any kind of income for two or even three months.

Ruby and I returned to Wuhan after I graduated from HST in 2018. We left Wuhan for the Christmas and Chinese Lunar New Year holidays a few days before the outbreak. We are now with Ruby's family in Canada. All the flights going back to Wuhan have been canceled until the end of March.

I invite you to pray for China and Christians in China daily.
-- February, 2020

WHAT I'VE GAINED FROM MY *Experience* AT HST



Photo Credit: Ben Bruner

By Ben Bruner

Note: Ben is an associate professor of biology at Harding University and is nearing the end of a Master of Arts degree at HST.

I decided to study at HST after struggling with the fact that I had devoted an incredible amount of my life to the pursuit of a Ph.D. in the biomedical sciences but had not given the same level of attention to the development of my spiritual life. Despite my interest in resolving the intellectual imbalance, at the time I feared that the faculty or students might be antagonistic toward the challenging nature of my scientific perspective. I'm still not certain what finally gave me the courage to submit my application and to go meet with the HST faculty, but I distinctly remember their encouragement and willingness to engage with the multitude of questions I had at the intersection of science and theology.

My initial goal was simply to deepen my understanding of biblical studies and theology in a similar fashion to the training I received during my previous graduate work, but what I ultimately gained far exceeded my overly simplistic desire for rigorous academic training. When I became a student at HST, I gained entry into a community of faith dedicated to the pursuit of both holiness and truth. I gained from the extraordinary knowledge and wisdom of faculty who are gifted academically and graceful in their spiritual mentoring.

Perhaps what I gained most of all from my experience at HST was hope. HST is empowering the next generation of scholars and ministers to engage with the difficult realities Christians face in the world today. Not only do I feel better prepared to serve the church, but I am comforted by the community of exceptionally gifted men and women who have chosen to make HST part of their lives.

FACULTY & STAFF NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Bob Turner published "What 1,443 Papers Tell Us About One People: Don Meredith's Bibliographic Essay and Churches of Christ," *Restoration Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2020): 37-46; and "Review of the Bloomsbury Handbook of Religion and Popular Music," *Journal of Religious and Theological Information* 18, no. 4 (2019): 135-6. He also hosted, along with the HST Advancement Office, "The World of the Bible" at the Germantown Church of Christ and the Church of Christ at White Station in Memphis.

Dr. Lance Hawley was a respondent to papers on Psalms at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in November. He gave a weekend of presentations on the book of Job for the Slicer Street Church of Christ in Kennett, Missouri, and on Wisdom Literature for Great Lakes Bible College in Waterloo, Ontario.

Dr. Mark Powell spoke on "Reading John Theologically: What John's Gospel Teaches Us About God" on the Kingdom Upgrowth podcast, Kings

Crossing Church of Christ, Corpus Christi, Texas, January 2020 (see kingdomupgrowth.com). He presented a three-week series on faith and reason, "Does It Make Sense to Believe?" for the Sycamore View Church of Christ youth group in Memphis in January.

Dr. Steve McLeod was installed as president of the Southern Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers at the Annual Conference in Alexandria, Virginia, in February.

Dr. Matt Carter spoke at the SOMA campus ministry at the University of Memphis and taught a class at Campus Encounter, a campus ministry conference in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Cory Spruiell, an M.A. in historical theology student, will present "James David Bales on Race and Civil Rights" at the Arkansas Historical Association Annual Conference in April.

DEGREE PROGRAMS

M.A.	Master of Arts
M.A.C.M.	Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
M.Div.	Master of Divinity
D.Min.	Doctor of Ministry
C.S.L.	Certificate in Spiritual Leadership



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News & Events



Memorial Day – Offices Closed
May 28



Intensive Week Course
June 15-20



Graduation
August 8



Convocation
August 24

Final Exams
May 11 - 15

Intensive Week Course
June 8-13

Offices Closed
July 3

First day of fall classes
August 17

